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“Inspiring Change for Global Sustainability”

CONFERENCE PROCEEDINGS



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SOCIAL AS AN EPIPHENOMENON OF ECONOMICS! EXPERIMENTING THE SOCIAL ENTERPRISE INTENTION OF NON- STEM UNIVERSITY STUDENTS

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Abstract

Purpose: Our study aimed to investigate the emerging trend of anti-social decisions made by young people in response to complex socio-economic constraints and to observe the challenges and potential in promoting Social Enterprise Intention.

Design/Methodology/Approach: The inquiry involved a series of classroom experiments conducted on 240 undergraduates in a hypothetical environment. The experiments presented the participants with opportunities to make prosocial or anti-social decisions regarding their occupational choices under four different socio-economic conditions and also in a structured coordination game.

Findings: The study suggests that financial limitations and constraints can decrease job satisfaction, leading to an increased likelihood of engaging in anti-social occupations. Underemployed individuals driven by income are more likely to resort to anti-social choices. Respondents with lower ambition are more motivated by personal gain and likely to pursue anti-social occupations. However, those who opt to be self-employed expressed the highest prosocial motivation, indicating a strong desire to contribute to society.

Research limitations: Our sample limited to the undergraduates who studies in Management and Social Science streams at the University of Peradeniya, Sri Lanka.

Implications: The results of the experiment are concerning because they suggest that prospective employees may be more likely to make choices that benefit themselves, rather than others, when faced with difficult social and economic situations. It's important to take these findings into account when creating educational policies and adjusting economic policies, such as tax

policies. We need to encourage and educate young people in Sri Lanka to develop and express their desire to create positive social change, by promoting pro-social values and behaviors.

Keywords: Choice experiment, Financial constraints, Social-enterprise intention, Pro-sociality